MY HEALTH CARE: PROTECTING PATIENT CHOICES FROM RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE

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Why This Issue Matters

- Religious ideology dictating health care
- Patient care put at risk
  - Reproductive Health Care
  - End-of-Life Health Care
  - Discrimination Against LGBT Families
- Public dollars subsidizing religious hospitals
- Increasing religious control of health care facilities
Recent Actions by Catholic Health Care Corporations

- Spokane (2010) – Labs
- Bellingham (2012) – Labs
- San Juan (2012) – Hospital
- Sedro-Woolley (2013) – Hospital
Hospital Consolidations Have Increased Dramatically in Washington

Source: Washington State Hospital Association

Number of Hospital Mergers & Affiliations

* Assumes proposed and pending mergers are approved by year end.

Source: Washington State Hospital Association
Communities with Hospitals Looking to Consolidate in 2013
More Than Hospitals Are Affected

- Physician Practice Groups
- Medical Clinics
- Medical Laboratories
- Medical Student Training
4 of 5 Religious Health Care Corporations in Washington Are Catholic

- Ascension Health
- Catholic Health Initiatives (Franciscan Health System)
- PeaceHealth
- Providence Health & Services
- Adventist Health
Today, Religious Hospitals Dominate Washington’s Population Centers
If Other Hospitals Consolidate with Religious Health Care Corporations ...

* Assumes proposed and pending mergers are approved by 2013 year end.
Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services

- Authored by U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Religious doctrine dictates service

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
“The Church’s moral teaching on health care nurtures a truly interpersonal professional-patient relationship. This professional-patient relationship is never separated, then, from the Catholic identity of the health care institution.”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
“Catholic health care services must adopt these Directives as policy, require adherence to them within the institution as a condition for medical privileges and employment, and provide appropriate instruction regarding the Directives . . . .”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
The Directives Affect Reproductive Health Care

• Fertility Treatment Not Allowed

“Reproductive technologies that substitute for the marriage act are not consistent with human dignity.”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
The Directives Affect Reproductive Health Care

• Birth Control Not Allowed

“Catholic health institutions may not promote or condone contraceptive practices.”

“Direct sterilization of either men or women, whether permanent or temporary, is not permitted in a Catholic health care institution.”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
The Directives Affect Reproductive Health Care

- Limits Options for Abnormal Pregnancy

“In case of extrauterine pregnancy, no intervention is morally licit which constitutes a direct abortion.”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
The Directives Affect End-of-Life Health Care

• Advance Directive May Not Be Honored

“a Catholic health care institution . . . will not honor an advance directive that is contrary to Catholic teaching.”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
The Directives Affect End-of-Life Health Care

• Death With Dignity Not Allowed

“Catholic health care institutions may never condone or participate in [Death With Dignity] in any way.”

“Patients experiencing suffering that cannot be alleviated should be helped to appreciate the Christian understanding of redemptive suffering.”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
The Directives Affect End-of-Life Health Care

• Do-Not-Resuscitate Orders May Not be Honored

“The free and informed judgment made by a competent adult patient concerning the use or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures should always be respected and normally complied with, unless it is contrary to Catholic moral teaching.”

Source: Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, 2009
The Directives Affect Health Care for LGBT Individuals

- Recognition of Same-Sex Couples
- Fertility Treatments
- Transgender Health Care
The Directives Are Contrary to State Public Policy and Law

**Washington Constitution**
- Equal Rights Amendment
- Religious Freedom

**Reproductive Privacy Act (1991)**
- “Every individual has the **fundamental right** to choose or refuse birth control”
- “Every woman has the **fundamental right** to choose or refuse ... abortion.”

**Anderson Murray Anti-Discrimination Law (2006)**
- Prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender expression or identity

**Death With Dignity Act (2008)**
- Allows terminally ill adults to access lethal doses of medication from medical and osteopathic physicians

**Marriage Equality (2012)**
- Removes the prohibition on marriage for same-sex couples
The ACLU of Washington is Taking Action

- Gathering Stories of Patients and Providers
- Researching for Litigation and Legislative Advocacy
- Educating the Public
- Reaching Out to Key Stakeholders
How Can You Help?

- **Talk** to your friends and colleagues and make them aware of how their health care choices are at risk

- **Share** the ACLU’s patient and provider intake questionnaire with friends and colleagues

- **Learn** more about this issue at: [www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org)